

3. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 1 wherein the customizable area includes one or more user interface panes that each display user interface elements of a corresponding application program.

4. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 1 including a message usage interface pane that displays user interface elements visually depicting a type of message received by a user in the telephony device.

5. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 4 wherein the user interface elements visually depicting a type of message comprise graphical icons indicating that the user has received a message.

6. (Previously Amended) The visual user interface of claim 5 wherein the graphical icons are user interface controls that respond to user input from an input device by initiating a message viewer to view the corresponding message.

8. (Previously Amended) A visual user interface for a telephony device with a screen display comprising the following user interface elements:

an application program selection area, including user interface controls for selecting application programs;

a call slip area, including a call slip user interface for displaying telephone line state information; and

a branding area for displaying a brand graphic.

12. (Unchanged) The interface of claim 8 wherein one or more of the display elements is customizable.

13. (Twice Amended) A method for developing software to run on a telephony device, the method comprising:

receiving a software platform for displaying a user interface on a display screen of the telephony device, wherein the software platform exposes a programmatic programming interface operable to provide functionality for customizing the user interface;

receiving default user interface program modules that each display default user interface elements in the user interface; and

creating a custom user interface program module, wherein the custom user interface program module uses the programmatic programming interface operable to provide functionality for customizing the user interface and displays a custom user interface element in the user interface.

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14. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 13 further including:

enumerating the custom program module in a data structure of an operating system to enable the software platform to identify the custom user interface element and add the custom user interface element to the user interface.

15. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 13 further including:

receiving a definition of a programmatic programming interface for a pane, where the programmatic programming interface includes a function for creating a custom pane in the display screen of the telephony device; and

developing code for the custom pane that implements the programmatic programming interface according to the definition, the code implementing the function for creating the custom pane.

16. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 13 including:

receiving a set of application programs associated with the default user interface elements; and

for a selected default user interface element, selecting an associated application program from the set to be loaded onto and executed in the telephony device;

wherein the associated application program uses the selected default user interface element as a user interface.

17. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the default program modules include a message program module for displaying a user interface for a message center application program in a message pane;

wherein the message center application program communicates state changes to the message program module, and wherein the message program module updates the message pane to reflect the state changes.

18. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the state changes include arrival of a fax, email, or answering message, and the message program module updates the message pane by displaying an indicator of the arrival of the message.

19. (Twice Amended) A computer readable medium having programming modules that control the display of a user interface of a screen phone, the programming modules including:

a shell program for controlling display of a user interface on a display screen of the screen phone, wherein the shell program exposes a programmatic programming interface operable to provide functionality for customizing the user interface;

default pane programs that each control display of default panes in the user interface, at least one of the default pane programs providing a user interface for a parent application program;

wherein the parent application program communicates state changes to the corresponding default pane program, and the corresponding default pane program updates the default pane to reflect the state changes.

20. (Unchanged) The computer readable medium of claim 19 wherein:
the parent application program is a message program for managing messages received by the screen phone, including fax, e-mail or answering machine messages;
the corresponding default pane program is a message pane program, and the message pane program updates the message pane by displaying an indicator of the arrival of the message.

21. (Previously Amended) A visual user interface for a telephony device with a screen display, the visual user interface comprising:

an application program selection area, including user interface controls for selecting application programs;
a call area, including a user interface for displaying telephone line state information; and

a message area for displaying a visual indicator of fax, e-mail, or answering machine messages.

22. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 21 further comprises a user interface element for enabling a user to activate a compose e-mail service.

23. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 21 further comprising a branding area for displaying a brand graphic.

24. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 21 wherein one or more of the areas are customizable.

25. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 21 wherein the visual user interface is operable to be customized by adding additional user interface elements.

26. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 1 wherein the customizable area further includes a message display element for displaying answering machine, e-mail or fax messages for one or more users.

27. (Unchanged) The visual user interface of claim 1 wherein the customizable area further includes a branding display element for displaying a brand graphic.

28. (Unchanged) The method of claim 13 further comprising creating a custom application program that uses the custom display element as a user interface and communicates state changes in the custom application program to the custom program module, wherein the custom program module is operable to update information displayed in the custom display element in response to the state changes.

29. (Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the programmatic programming interface exposed by the software platform comprises the following function as a platform service for customizing the user interface:

a function for adding a pane to the user interface.

30. (Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the programmatic programming interface exposed by the software platform further comprises the following function as a platform service for customizing the user interface:

registering the pane to receive messages related to a status change for the pane.

31. (Unchanged) The method of claim 30 wherein the software platform offers the following platform service:

as a result of registering the pane, posting a message indicating a status change to the pane when an event related to a status change is detected.

32. (Unchanged) A computer-implemented method for providing run-time customization of a user interface of a telephony device, the method comprising:

at run-time of the user interface, accepting an indication that a new user interface element is to be added to the user interface of the telephony device; and

responsive to the accepting, adding the new user interface element to the user interface of the telephony device;

wherein the accepting facilitates customization of the user interface of the telephony device at run-time of the user interface.

33. (Unchanged) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 32.

34. (Amended) The method of claim 32 wherein the accepting is accomplished via a programmatic programming interface.

35. (Amended) The method of claim 34 further comprising:

via the programmatic programming interface, accepting an indication that the new user interface element is to be registered for receiving messages related to the new user interface element.

36. (Amended) The method of claim 35 wherein the programmatic programming interface further accepts a reference to the new user interface element.

37. (Unchanged) The method of claim 32 wherein the new user interface element comprises a new pane.

38. (Unchanged) The method of claim 32 wherein the new user interface element enables a user to select a service provided by the telephony device.

39. (Unchanged) The method of claim 32 wherein the new user interface element enables a user to activate a compose e-mail service.

40. (Unchanged) The method of claim 32 wherein the new user interface element enables a user to activate an online directory service.

41. (Unchanged) A telephony device comprising:
a screen display;
a computer-readable medium; and
a user input device;
wherein the computer-readable medium has stored thereon a software platform comprising:

computer executable instructions for displaying a graphical user interface for the telephony device on the screen display; and

an application programming interface operable to enable customization of the user interface during run-time of the user interface.

42. (Unchanged) The telephony device of claim 41 wherein the graphical user interface comprises a message area for displaying a visual indicator of fax, e-mail, or answering machine messages.

43. (Unchanged) The telephony device of claim 41 wherein the graphical user interface comprises a user interface element for enabling a user to activate a compose e-mail service or an online directory service.

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44. (Unchanged) The telephony device of claim 41 wherein the graphical user interface comprises a branding area for displaying a brand graphic.

45. (Unchanged) A method of communicating between a pane program and a shell program in a telephony device, wherein the shell program is operable to display a user interface for the telephony device, the method comprising:

providing a pane identifier in a function call, wherein the identifier is associated with a new pane to be added to the user interface; and

in response to the providing, creating an instance of the new pane in the user interface; wherein the function call calls a function in a programming interface exposed by the shell program, and wherein the programming interface facilitates customization of the user interface.